

Quad-City Times
Sheri Melvold

Braley hears from young voices on health care issue

By

MAQUOKETA, Iowa - A health-care town hall meeting by U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley served as a civics lesson Thursday for about 150 eighth-graders from Maquoketa Middle School.

Braley, D-Iowa, explained the House version of the proposed health-care bill, then took questions for about an hour from the crowd of 400 that spanned all ages at the Jackson County Fairgrounds.

Middle school student Peter Lyon responded to a comment that residents didn't need federal government interference.

"With this recession, we do need government help," Lyon said as his fellow students applauded.

Another student, Brianna Gomez, asked what would happen if a student needed an abortion and whether the federal health-care system take care of those situations.

Braley explained there are provisions in the law now which allow federal money to be used for abortions under specific restrictions, such as rape and the health of the mother. The congressman said the proposed health-care bill does not make any changes concerning abortions.

However, Greg Betts of Clinton cited several sources, including statements from some Catholic bishops who said funding for abortions is included in the House bill. Braley said he's read the bill and was a part of the discussions on the subject and there is no money in the bill

for specifically for abortions.

"Are you saying Catholic bishops are lying?" Betts countered. Braley did not respond.

Dr. Roger Waller explained his experience with the insurance offered for National Guard families.

"It's a travesty the insurance they are providing these people. TriCare pays less than Medicaid. People can't get the specialists they need," Waller said. "I'm not sure it will be an improvement if this is what we will have."

Braley said the Department of Defense oversees that insurance program and he has been working with the department to shore up the problems.

Braley disagreed with the premise that government-run insurance would have the same problems as private health-care providers. Braley said he had knee surgery in August and has been having difficulty with the provider paying claims because the provider says it's a work-related problem. Braley said there is nothing in his files saying work was involved.

"There are problems. We need to simplify all of them," he said.